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Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/156. In the report, the Special Rapporteur addresses recent, concerning shifts in ideologies and support for Nazism and neo-Nazism and their glorification. Contemporary manifestations of Nazism and neo-Nazism constitute continuing human rights and democratic challenges, and the Special Rapporteur recalls the applicable international human rights legal framework in this context. The Special Rapporteur highlights the broadening of neo-Nazi groups to embrace white nationalists and right-wing populist movements, and the manner in which this broadening poses a serious threat to many racial, ethnic and religious groups. Women, gender and sexually diverse populations, and persons with disabilities are also targets. She documents the recent political impact and popularity of neo-Nazism and its embrace even by political leaders at the highest levels of national office. She also surveys the role of technology in consolidating neo-Nazism and its harmful effects, especially where children and youth are concerned. In conclusion, the Special Rapporteur offers recommendations for future research and consultations in order for States to better understand and address the contemporary scourge of neo-Nazism. She also calls on civil society organizations to form unified, diverse coalitions in opposition to neo-Nazism.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/156, in which the Assembly requested the Special Rapporteur to prepare, for submission to, inter alia, the Council at its thirty-eighth session, a report on the implementation of that resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

2. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur addresses concerning shifts in the ideologies and support for Nazism and neo-Nazism. She highlights, in particular, the contemporary resurgence and spread of support for neo-Nazi ideologies in different parts of the world, and the serious threat these ideologies pose to Jews, Muslims, people of African descent, Roma, indigenous peoples, women, racial and ethnic minorities, gender and sexually diverse populations, and persons with disabilities. Based on the previous reports to the General Assembly and to the Human Rights Council, as well as on desk research, her analysis examines these manifestations as contrary to human rights norms, including the principles of equality and human dignity. Notwithstanding its historically specific and geographically contained origins, neo-Nazi ideology remains a contemporary problem affecting diverse populations.

3. As mandated by General Assembly resolution 72/156, the Special Rapporteur intends to send questionnaires to member States and other relevant stakeholders in order to inform her next report to the General Assembly and collect their views with regard to combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. She especially welcomes examples of strategies and practices that States have found successful in combating these phenomena.

II. Neo-Nazism: a brief overview

4. Nazi and neo-Nazi ideology are antithetical to the principles at the core of international human rights.[1] The very first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Member states have issued a clear statement that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.[2]

5. Nazism and neo-Nazism reject racial equality and even advocate extreme violence[3] if necessary to achieve their vision of oppression and discrimination. At the core of these ideologies is an unwavering commitment to the protection of the "purity" of the "Aryan race" against other peoples who are cast as barbaric. Anti-Semitism is a central tool in this ideology, and the extermination of Jews during the Holocaust remains a potent reminder of why such ideology must never be tolerated and instead be vehemently combated. Neo-Nazi intolerance is not limited to Jews or people of Jewish descent. It also vilifies many other racial, ethnic and religious groups including Slavs, people of African descent and Muslims.

[1] The term "neo-Nazi" generally refers to movements and groups that draw on the ideology of the National Socialist German Workers Party. Movements in this category are broadly premised on the political philosophy advanced by Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany, but adherents adopt a wide variety of other beliefs.

[2] International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, preamble.

[3] Holger H. Herwig, "*Geopolitik*: Haushofer, Hitler and lebensraum", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 22, No. 2–3 (1999), pp. 218–241.

While anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism are central, neo-Nazism also embraces homophobia and discrimination against people with disabilities.[4]

6. Although the philosophical commitments of Adolf Hitler are a central theme, neo-Nazism has different variants. Indeed, some groups emphasize simple hatred against historically discriminated groups, while others focus on the revolutionary creation of a fascist political State.[5] Neo-Nazism is also often closely aligned with white nationalism, which shares a core commitment to white racial supremacy and the inferiority of non-white people. This affiliation with white nationalism, as a contemporary trend of significance, is discussed in more detail below.

7. At its extreme edges, members of the neo-Nazi umbrella believe a war between races is imminent and thus seek to train and arm themselves in their quest for victory. These groupings consist of militarized clusters of racist skinhead adherents of radical right-wing ideology. Some activists acting on this belief and anticipating infiltration by security agencies adopt "lone wolf" campaigns characterized by small cells of activists acting without the leadership of the main group but drawing on its ideology to commit acts of violence and terrorism premised on the ideology. The Special Rapporteur would like to recall the horrendous act of terrorism that took place in Norway on July 2011 when Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 persons, including 69 young persons, for the cause of racial superiority. The killer clearly affiliated himself with neo-Nazi ideology, and his gruesome attack, whose victims included many white Norwegians, demonstrates clearly why neo-Nazism is a threat to nations as a whole, and not just to those racial and ethnic groups that are its direct target.

8. In addition to these extreme adherents, today supporters of this ideology who do not fit the conventional image of neo-Nazis are increasingly visible and proudly so.[6] Neo-Nazis also rely on various forms of popular culture to propagate their cause. For example, in countries where Nazism and holocaust denial were prohibited, music became an important tool used by neo-Nazi groups to spread their message and politicize potential followers. Indeed, the main activities of these organizations include publishing and consuming music and literature based on advancing Nazi ideology, staging grand meetings and making public proclamations.

9. Neo-Nazism is by no means a new phenomenon. The emergence of the transnational neo-Nazi movement can be traced back to as early as 1949 with the creation of the European Liberation Front in London.[7] Since then, the number of neo-Nazi-affiliated organizations has proliferated as new organizations and splinter groups emphasize different aspects of the ideology. In the late twentieth century, a neo-Nazi culture increasingly began to emerge in several different places worldwide, as local leaders imported ideas from Scandinavia and Western Europe.[8] Neo-Nazi organizations started demanding racial segregation and expulsion of non-white populations, especially in Europe and North America. These organizations attempted to create a consciousness of white superiority from which groups such as Jews, Roma and Sinti were among those excluded. Over time, the appeal of the neo-Nazism movement has expanded progressively beyond its traditional

[4] Raphael S. Ezekiel, "An ethnographer looks at neo-Nazi and Klan groups: the racist mind revisited", *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 46, No. 1 (2002), pp. 51–71.

[5] Southern Poverty Law Center, "Neo-Nazi". Available at https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/neo-nazi.

[6] In one country, white nationalists willing to support neo-Nazi ideology include "young men wearing 'fashy' haircuts, khakis and polo shirts". Heidi Beirich and Susy Buchanan, "2017: the year in hate and extremism", Southern Poverty Law Center, 11 February 2018. Available at https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2018/2017-year-hate-and-extremism#neo-nazi.

[7] Jean-Yves Camus, "Neo-Nazism in Europe", in *The Extreme Right in Europe*, Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau, eds. (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), pp. 231–242.

[8] Ibid., p. 236.

geographic bounds to include neo-Nazi organizations in countries beyond Europe and North America.[9]

10. For many years, neo-Nazis were largely out of the mainstream, finding safe havens on the Internet or in small local and generally private gatherings. Neo-Nazi organizations were generally marginal and lacked political efficacy. However, in recent years, the rise of white nationalism and right-wing populist parties around the world — embracing hate speech towards specific groups of people that are generally despised by neo-Nazi groups — has permitted neo-Nazism to grow in relevance.[10] Media reports suggest that links between American and European neo-Nazis are strong and growing stronger. With good reason, the growing phenomenon of websites run by neo-Nazi and skinhead organizations is of increasing interest and concern to European institutions. Unfortunately, it remains the case that neo-Nazism is more than just the glorification of a past movement; it is a contemporary movement with strong vested interests in racial inequality and an investment in gaining broad support for its false claims of racial superiority.

III. Applicable legal framework

11. In the fight against the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other similar practices fuelling racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, the Special Rapporteur wishes to recall that States have the following obligations.

12. As mentioned in the preamble to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States have proclaimed with conviction that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere. Under article 5 of the Convention, States have undertaken to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right for everyone to enjoy various listed rights. According to article 4 of the Convention, States must condemn all propaganda and all organizations that are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or that attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form. Under this provision, States have also undertaken to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination. Finally, article 4 also requires States to declare as offences punishable by law: all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred; incitement to racial discrimination; all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin; and the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof.

13. The Special Rapporteur also wishes to remind States of their commitment under article 87 of the Durban Declaration to move forward in taking action against and condemning organizations that disseminate ideas based on racial superiority or hatred.

14. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the fundamental right to hold opinions without interference. Significantly, article 20 of the Covenant provides a vital clarification of the scope of the human right to freedom of expression, namely that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

15. While recalling the relevant legal framework, the Special Rapporteur wishes to also reiterate that revisions of the Holocaust and attempts to falsify history not only contribute to

[9] See, for example, Marcos Chor Maio, "Against racism: search for an alliance between Afro-Brazilians and Brazilian Jews in the early 1990s", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 10, No. 2 (2014). Available at http://eial.tau.ac.il/index.php/eial/article/view/1009/1044. Jacqueline Z. Wilson, "Racist and political extremist graffiti in Australian prisons, 1970s to 1990s", *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, vol. 47, No. 1 (2008).

[10] In one North American country, within the white supremacist movement, neo-Nazi groups saw the greatest growth of 22 per cent, rising from 99 to 121 groups. Camus, "Neo-Nazism in Europe", p. 238.

the rehabilitation and dissemination of Nazism and other extreme ideologies, but also create fertile ground for nationalist and neo-Nazi demonstrations.[11] Such revisionism may fall under the prohibition of hate speech under article 4 (a), which States are required to declare as offences punishable by law.

IV. Contemporary manifestations of glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism

A. Neo-Nazism's broad ideological base and its social impact on racial equality

16. Neo-Nazism today regularly combines with other ideologies of racial superiority or hatred as a means of widening acceptance and strengthening its support base. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern the success of this strategy as suggested by growing support and acceptance of neo-Nazi ideology in an increasing number of countries. To name but one example, the former Special Rapporteur, in the report on his mission to Greece,[12] deplored the rise and normalization of neo-Nazi ideology and political parties grounded on this ideology, such as the Golden Dawn, which entered the Athens City Council in 2010 and Parliament in 2012. The leadership and members of Golden Dawn had openly praised Nazism and Adolf Hitler, and engaged in denial of the Holocaust and in anti-Semitic hate speech as well as hate rhetoric against migrants.

17. The resurgence of neo-Nazism in contemporary times has much to do with the broadening of this movement to include and contribute to various networks of white supremacist, racist and xenophobic projects, especially the project of white nationalism, and other extreme right-wing ideologies. This broadening of neo-Nazism has made it more accessible, and by forging allegiances with other groups espousing ideologies of racial hatred and superiority — including ideologies of white nationalism — neo-Nazi groups have expanded their reach. As discussed below in more detail, political leaders and even government officials at the highest level, have regrettably been complicit in this expansion.

18. The contemporary strengthening of neo-Nazism has had grave social consequences, including violent acts by groups connected to this movement and who share related ideologies of racial superiority and hatred.[13] In Europe and North America especially, there have been dramatic increases in anti-Semitic incidents tied to neo-Nazi groups and affiliated white supremacist and white nationalist groups. As noted by the former Special Rapporteur, several recent incidents were perpetrated by neo-Nazi-affiliated groups in Greece,[14] Estonia,[15] Latvia,[16] Bulgaria,[17] the United States of America,[18] Ukraine,[19] the Russian Federation[20] and Argentina,[21] to name a few. Contemporary iterations of Nazi ideology have grown in their traditional strongholds and in some cases expanded beyond them, posing a threat to racial equality in different parts of the world.

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[11] See A/HRC/23/24, para. 12.

[12] See A/HRC/32/50/Add.1, para. 51.

[13] OHCHR, "US racism on the rise, UN experts warn in wake of Charlottesville violence", released on 16 August 2017. Available at: www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21975.

[14] See A/72/291, paras. 63–67.

[15] Ibid., paras. 68–70.

[16] Ibid., paras. 71–73.

[17] Ibid., paras. 74–76.

[18] See A/70/321, paras. 57–62.

[19] Ibid., paras. 63–67.

[20] A/HRC/26/21, p. 60, and a joint letter from the Special Rapporteur and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (RUS 2/2014). Available at https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/25th/Public_-_AL_Russia_20.02.14_(2.2014)_Pro.pdf.

[21] See A/71/325, para. 10; and A/70/321, para. 9.

19. In January 2018, anti-Semitic posts on social media and conversations denying the Holocaust rose by almost thirty per cent compared with the same period in 2016.[22] On average, around 550 posts a day used neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic symbols, and 108 posts a day denied the Holocaust.[23]

20. In the United States, anti-Semitic incidents rose by nearly 60 per cent, with 1,986 anti-Semitic incidents occurring in 2017.[24] Similarly, in the United Kingdom, anti-Semitic hate incidents have reached record highs, with a total of 1,382 recorded in 2017.[25] Germany has also seen a rise in hate crimes perpetrated by neo-Nazis.[26] Government intelligence agency reports also show an uptick in far-right violent crimes.[27]

21. An emerging neo-Nazi group in the United States, Atomwaffen, has been linked to the suspects of at least five recent murders.[28] A well-known white supremacist website, Stormfront.org, or as dubbed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, "the murder capital of the internet", is linked to almost 100 killings between 2009 and 2015.[29] White supremacist murders more than doubled in 2017 compared with 2016 — accounting for 18 of the total 34 extremist-related murders in the United States.[30]

B. The recent political impact and political popularity of neo-Nazism

22. The Special Rapporteur expresses her deep concerns at the general growing presence of expressions of Nazism, neo-Nazism and fascism in politics worldwide, especially in several European and North American countries. Neo-Nazi groups today are emboldened by prominent populist leaders who share their beliefs and espouse the same rhetoric as they do. Indeed, the rise of populism and, especially, right-wing, nationalist populism has, in some countries, aided the popularity of neo-Nazi ideology. Although many nationalist populist leaders in Europe, North America and Australia[31] formally disavow neo-Nazi ideology, they nonetheless express support for racist and xenophobic tenets that are premised on similar ideologies of racial superiority that are at the core of neo-Nazi ideology. All theories of racial superiority, and all efforts to scapegoat persons on the basis of their race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or related status make the work of neo-Nazis easier. Even where neo-Nazis are not formally included in Government, the presence therein of extreme right-wing ideologues can have the effect of injecting into governance and political discourse the very same ideologies that make neo-Nazism so dangerous.

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[22] See www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/holocaust-denial-and-anti-semitism-on-social-media-up-30-percent-in-january-2018-compared-to-2016-wjc-report-finds-2-3-2018.

[23] World Jewish Congress, "Anti-Semitic symbols and Holocaust denial in social media posts: January 2018". Available from the web page in the preceding footnote.

[24] Anti-Defamation League, "2017 audit of anti-Semitic incidents". Available at https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/2017-audit-of-anti-semitic-incidents.

[25] Community Security Trust, "Antisemitic incidents report 2017". Available at https://cst.org.uk/data/file/a/b/IR17.1517308734.pdf.

[26] Germany, Federal Ministry of the Interior, *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2016* (Berlin, 2017), pp. 23–24 and 40. Available at https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/vsbericht-2016.pdf.

[27] Deutsche Welle, "Germany: far-right violence and Islamist threat on the rise", 4 April 2017. Available at www.dw.com/en/germany-far-right-violence-and-islamist-threat-on-the-rise/a-39534868.

[28] Anti-Defamation League, "Murder and extremism in the United States in 2017: an ADL Center on extremism report". Available at https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2017.

[29] Heidi Beirich, "White homicide worldwide" (Alabama, Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014). Available at https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/white-homicide-worldwide.pdf.

[30] Anti-Defamation League press release, "ADL report: white supremacist murders more than doubled in 2017", 17 January 2018. Available at https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-white-supremacist-murders-more-than-doubled-in-2017. See also River Donaghey, "Armed neo-Nazi attempted terror attack on Amtrak train", Vice, 5 January 2018. Available at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/7xewbg/armed-neo-nazi-attempted-terror-attack-on-amtrak-train-fbi-says-vgtrn.

[31] See A/HRC/35/41/Add.4, para. 51.

23. As a previous Special Rapporteur has noted, right-wing populism spreads and exploits antipathy towards ethnic, racial or religious minorities by accusing these groups of having co-opted political elites for their own advancement. Furthermore, as another Special Rapporteur has also noted, in times of great social, political and economic anxiety in the global North, it is among those who perceive themselves as the most marginalized (including among white majorities) that such antipathy can gain easy traction. To exploit the public's dissatisfaction with, and fear and resentment of, the conditions of the State and personal circumstances, right-wing populists adopt and advance opinions and trends that are likely to fuel populist mobilization. In this regard, the following statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights captures a persisting dynamic:

> Populists use half-truths and oversimplification — the two scalpels of the arch propagandist, and here the Internet and social media are a perfect rail for them, by reducing thought into the smallest packages: sound-bites; tweets. Paint half a picture in the mind of an anxious individual, exposed as they may be to economic hardship and through the media to the horrors of terrorism. Prop this picture up by some half-truth here and there and allow the natural prejudice of people to fill in the rest. Add drama, emphasizing it is all the fault of a clear-cut group, so the speakers lobbing this verbal artillery, and their followers, can feel somehow blameless.
>
> The formula is therefore simple: make people, already nervous, feel terrible, and then emphasize it is all because of a group, lying within, foreign and menacing. Then make your target audience feel good by offering up what is a fantasy to them, but a horrendous injustice to others. Inflame and quench, repeat many times over, until anxiety has been hardened into hatred.[32]

24. Right-wing populists in some nations have shown themselves willing to align with white nationalists and even neo-Nazis. In the last presidential election in the United States, President Trump's reliance on a political platform regularly espousing white nationalist beliefs and vilifying racial, religious and national minorities created a safe harbour for neo-Nazi ideology and action.[33] Following the election of President Trump, he has on grave occasion failed to condemn in an outright manner the glorification of neo-Nazism.[34]

25. In some countries in which expressions of Nazism and fascism are not prohibited, several neo-Nazi parties have emerged and contested electoral processes. In some European countries, political parties aligning themselves with neo-Nazi ideologies have emerged in mainstream politics. Some such parties have achieved varying levels of electoral success,

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[32] Speech delivered at the Peace, Justice and Security Foundation gala, The Hague, 5 September 2016. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20452.

[33] Ibid. In that statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the presidential candidate and other political leaders in Europe whose racial ideologies have made the world a more hospitable place for outright neo-Nazism. See Jessica Reaves, "White supremacists celebrate Trump's victory", Anti-Defamation League, 10 November 2016 (available at https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-celebrate-trumps-victory?_ga=2.8537333.1383705201.1522706891-505254518.1522706891); Anti-Defamation League, "ADL deeply concerned over reports of anti-Semitic & hate incidents following election 2016", 14 November 2016 (available at https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-deeply-concerned-over-reports-of-anti-semitic-hate-incidents-following); Human Rights Watch, "Update: US President Trump's response to Charlottesville events", 14 August 2017 (available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/14/update-us-president-trumps-response-charlottesville-events); Anti-Defamation League, "White supremacists react gleefully to President Trump's 'rogue' press conference", 17 August 2017 (available at https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-react-gleefully-to-president-trumps-rogue-press-conference); and Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. in the wake of Charlottesville rally", 30 August 2017 (available at https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semitic-incidents-in-the-us-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville-rally).

[34] Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, "UN body criticizes US 'failure at the highest political level to unequivocally reject racist violent events'", 23 August 2017. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21990. OHCHR, "US racism on the rise, UN experts warn in wake of Charlottesville violence", 16 August 2017. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21975. Beirich and Buchanan, "2017: the year in hate and extremism".

allowing them in some cases to secure legislative seats. As of July 2017, right-wing populist parties were in Government in eight European countries: Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland, while there are three nationalist parties that are now part of the governing coalition in Bulgaria.[35] It was estimated that the total number of European voters who supported a populist party in their latest general elections amounted to 21.4 per cent.[36]

26. In sum, white supremacist and neo-Nazi ideologies have a symbiotic relationship with right-wing populism, each strengthening the other. By adopting the language and core ideas of these extreme ideologies, right-wing populists gain political power by mobilizing these groups to vote for them. In turn, when populist politicians gain mainstream success, white nationalist and neo-Nazi ideas become more socially acceptable. Emboldened by seeing leaders sympathetic to their cause in Government, white supremacists and neo-Nazis increasingly occupy public platforms and recruit new members.

C. The role of technology in the spread of neo-Nazi ideology

27. Neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups have taken advantage of new digital technologies and social platforms to promote their ideologies and arguments.[37] Indeed, the Internet has made it easier for people to communicate, express their views and engage in debate across vast distances. The Internet has also provided groups espousing racial superiority and hatred with effective platforms for spreading their messages, organizing events and raising money.[38] The anonymity provided by the Internet and social media allows people to express views that they would deny in public.[39] Moreover, the interactivity of new social media platforms allows for the easier creation of virtual communities in which extremists can easily disseminate information to their target audiences.[40]

1. Digital recruitment, especially of youth

28. The Internet, and social media in particular, have become a growing means through which neo-Nazi groups recruit followers. It is documented that hate groups such as these usually direct their recruitment efforts at targeting susceptible individuals, such as loners and children. Groups espousing racial superiority — including neo-Nazis — have increasingly targeted children and youth as recruits because they are typically more impressionable, may feel alone and marginal, and desire a sense of identity and group belonging.[41] Some neo-Nazi websites are specifically tailored towards children, with the aim of their indoctrination. Neo-Nazi websites appeal to children through music, activities, games, "memes" and cartoon characters on their websites.[42] Indeed, even video games exist

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[35] See https://timbro.se/app/uploads/2017/07/briefing-timbro-authoritarian-populism-index-2017.pdf. The three nationalist parties in Bulgaria are: Attack, the Bulgarian National Movement and the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria.

[36] Ibid.

[37] See A/HRC/26/49, para. 18. For example, the major hate forum, Stormfront, now has more than 300,000 members. Mark Potok, "The year in hate and extremism", Southern Poverty Law Center, 17 February 2016. Available at https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2016/year-hate-and-extremism. The site has been adding about 25,000 registered users annually for several years.

[38] Francie Diep, "How social media helped organize and radicalize America's white supremacists", *Pacific Standard*, 15 August 2017. Available at https://psmag.com/social-justice/how-social-media-helped-organize-and-radicalize-americas-newest-white-supremacists.

[39] LaShel Shaw, "Hate speech in cyberspace: bitterness without boundaries", *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy*, vol. 25, No. 1 (2012), pp. 279–304.

[40] Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist migration to social media", *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 16, No. 1 (2015), pp. 180–187, at p. 181.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Michael Edison Hayden, "Neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer is 'designed to target children' as young as 11 for radicalization, editor claims", *Newsweek*, 16 January 2018. Available at www.newsweek.com/website-daily-stormer-designed-target-children-editor-claims-782401. See also Julian Baumrin, "Internet hate speech and the First Amendment, revisited", *Rutgers Computer & Technology Law Journal*, vol. 37, No. 1–2 (2011), p. 230 ("typical methods of attraction include

that are devoted to propagating ideologies of racial superiority and racial hatred. One example of such a game brought to the attention of the Special Rapporteur involves the player playing the role of a neo-Nazi person tasked with killing non-whites or groups identified as enemies by neo-Nazi groups. Furthermore, some of the neo-Nazi websites and forums include revisionist historical educational lessons for children.

29. A study done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media" explains that, while there is some correlation between youth violence and extremist propaganda, the exact roles of the Internet and social media in contributing to the radicalization process needs further exploration.[43]

2. Digital platforms as sites of hate speech and incitement to violence

30. In addition to recruitment, neo-Nazis and other hate groups also use digital platforms to incite hatred and violence on racial, ethnic, religious and related grounds.[44, 45] The ease and rapidity with which information can now be shared online, especially through social media platforms, means these platforms have now become arguably the most frequent sites of hate speech, and even incitement to violence. These platforms have facilitated the global transmission of harmful stereotypes against stigmatized groups targeted by groups such as neo-Nazis. Such stereotypes and related propaganda make violence against targeted groups more acceptable and arguably more likely.[46] In addition, neo-Nazi and related groups have also relied on online platforms to plan and circulate information about public events that range from demonstrations to acts of violence, including targeting groups and individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation and related grounds.

31. As just mentioned, digital platforms are now a hotbed for the spread of ideologies of racial superiority. YouTube is the main content generator for some of the most intense right-wing media. YouTube stores billions of videos and has a massive reach of over 1.5 billion viewers a month.[47] It directs viewers to videos based on videos previously watched; thus, a person who watches a neo-Nazi video will be directed to similar content. Notably, videos are used by neo-Nazis to help create false images.[48] For example, a video of a neo-

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cloaking racist and xenophobic messages within music, games, activities, and cartoon characters"); John M. Cotter, "Sounds of hate: white power rock and roll and the neo-Nazi skinhead subculture", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 11, No. 2 (1999), p. 121; James Paul Gee, "Stories, probes, and games", *Narrative Inquiry*, vol. 21, No. 2 (2011), p. 356; and Phyllis B. Gerstenfeld, Diana R. Grant and Chau-Pu Chiang, "Hate online: a content analysis of extremist Internet sites", *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, vol. 3, No. 1 (2003), pp. 29–44, at p. 35.

[43] Séraphin Alava, Divina Frau-Meigs and Ghayda Hassan, *Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research* (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). Available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002603/260382e.pdf.

[44] See, for example, Beirich, "White homicide worldwide" (analysing the connection between membership in an online platform espousing ideologies of racial superiority, incitement to violence and actual violence against targeted groups); and Diep, "How social media helped organize and radicalize America's white supremacists" (discussing the use of social media to coordinate a rally that included neo-Nazis and other hate groups and at which 1 person was killed and 19 others injured).

[45] Beirich, "White homicide worldwide".

[46] Kusminder Chahal, *Supporting Victims of Hate Crime: A Practitioner's Guide* (Bristol, Policy Press, 2016); Danielle Keats Citron and Helen L. Norton, "Intermediaries and hate speech: fostering digital citizenship for our information age", *Boston University Law Review*, vol. 91 (2011), p. 1437; Travis Morris, "Networking vehement frames: neo-Nazi and violent jihadi demagoguery", *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, vol. 6, No. 3 (2014), pp. 163–182, at pp. 163–171; and Linda M. Woolf and Michael R. Hulsizer, "Intra- and inter-religious hate and violence: a psychosocial model", *Journal of Hate Studies*, vol. 2, No. 5 (2003), pp. 5–25.

[47] Bob Moser, "How YouTube became the worldwide leader in white supremacy", *New Republic*, 21 August 2017. Available at https://newrepublic.com/article/144141/youtube-became-worldwide-leader-white-supremacy.

[48] Brentin Mock, "Neo-Nazi groups share hate via YouTube", Southern Poverty Law Center, 20 April 2007. Available at https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2007/neo-nazi-groups-share-hate-youtube.

Nazi rally in one country blurred out anti-racist protestors to help present a powerful image of a particular branch of neo-Nazis.[49]

32. Twitter has been utilized as a primary social media platform to exercise attacks on journalists. Journalists rely on Twitter to share information and publish their work. During the recent United States presidential campaign, anti-Semitic language was used in 2.6 million tweets generating more than 10 billion impressions.[50] A significant number of the anti-Semitic tweeters identified as supporters of the nationalist populist candidate who eventually won that election.[51] These tweets were directed primarily at Jewish journalists as well as non-Jewish journalists who criticized that candidate.[52]

33. As social media platforms attempt to combat neo-Nazi and other ideologies of hate, a challenge they face is the variation in national standards prohibiting hate speech. Countries that have legal frameworks that protect speech that is prohibited elsewhere ultimately serve as safe havens for neo-Nazi speech.[53] Consequently, many hate groups host their sites on Internet service providers in the United States.[54]

34. Although social media companies are slowly working towards a better control of content posted on their platforms,[55] as recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, there is still much work to be done effectively to address racial hatred and intolerance online.[56]

V. Conclusion and recommendations

35. **There are deep structural causes behind the rise of extreme and unashamed ideologies of racial superiority, including neo-Nazism. These require reform at a fundamental level, including counteracting the economic inequality that can catalyse intolerance and discrimination. At the same time, there are discrete measures that States can take to combat some of the trends identified in this report, especially the role of technology in aiding neo-Nazism, and the effects of neo-Nazism on children and youth, and their involvement in affiliated groups. As a matter of priority, more research is required to develop a better understanding of these two issues. As a result, the Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations to member States:**

(a) **The Special Rapporteur reiterates the recommendations contained in the reports of her predecessors to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, as they remain valid and current. She also urges States to take immediate measures to combat direct and indirect manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism and related intolerance, including implementing legal sanctions;**

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Semitic targeting of journalists during the 2016 presidential campaign" (New York, 19 October 2016). Available at https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/press-center/CR_4862_Journalism-Task-Force_v2.pdf.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] For example, the legal frameworks of one North American country have been favourable to neo-Nazi and other hate groups propagating hate speech. Peter J. Breckheimer, "A haven for hate: the foreign and domestic implications of protecting internet hate speech under the First Amendment", *Southern California Law Review*, vol. 75 (2002), pp. 1493–1528, at p. 1506. Ira Steven Nathenson, "Super-intermediaries, code, human rights", *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 8, No. 19 (2013), pp. 96–97.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Julia Fioretti, "Social media companies accelerate removals of online hate speech: EU", Reuters. Available at https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-hatespeech/social-media-companies-accelerate-removals-of-online-hate-speech-eu-idUSKBN1F806X.

[56] See A/HRC/26/49, para. 17.

(b) **The Special Rapporteur urges States to assist civil society organizations representing the spectrum of populations directly impacted by contemporary manifestations of neo-Nazism and related intolerance, by providing them with the resources necessary to form and sustain diverse and transnational coalitions. Notwithstanding its historically specific and geographically contained origins, neo-Nazi ideology remains a contemporary problem affecting diverse populations as discussed above. Its common impact on peoples of different racial, ethnic, religious or related groups should unite these groups, including across borders, in the fight against neo-Nazism;**

(c) **In the light of General Assembly resolution 72/156, which mandates the present report, the Special Rapporteur wishes to echo the Assembly's encouragement of States that have made reservations to article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to withdraw these reservations due to its obligatory character. She also calls upon States to continue taking steps through national legislation in accordance with international human rights law, aimed at preventing hate speech and incitement to violence. States must withdraw support — financial and otherwise — from political parties and other organizations that engage in neo-Nazi or other hate speech or fail forcefully to condemn such speech by their members. Where such hate speech aims, or can reasonably be expected to incite violence, States must take steps to dismantle the responsible organizations;**

(d) **States should provide resources, including to this mandate, for research and consultations, including with stakeholders such as private technology and social media companies, in order to deepen international understanding of how technology is aiding the spread of racial and related intolerance. This research should also produce recommendations for concrete steps for combating the advance of neo-Nazism through online technologies;**

(e) **States should provide resources, including to this mandate, for research and consultations, including technology and social media companies and experts in child psychology, to deepen international understanding of the impact of neo-Nazism on youth and children, and the factors that draw youth to neo-Nazi movements. This research and related consultations should also produce a blueprint for combating youth and child involvement in neo-Nazism;**

(f) **States must also take immediate measures to combat direct and indirect manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance affecting youth and children, including their recruitment to extremist groups.**

36. **For her next report to the General Assembly on neo-Nazism, the Special Rapporteur respectfully calls on States to share information on their concerns and good practices with respect to technology and youth where neo-Nazism is concerned, as outlined in this report. She will issue a formal call for submissions in this regard in due course.**